

Name of Principle Investigator: Samara Smith
Project Title: Collaborative Media Lab Pilot

1. Please consider the original timeline and deliverable targets. How is your project progressing compared with the original estimates?

Staffing was challenging (issues outlined in #3). Student tutor hours were limited in the fall but strong in the spring.

I was able to plan the linked courses with collaborating Professors on schedule. We developed interesting digital humanities projects for two spring courses as planned. This aspect has been very successful and on target. One course digital humanities project is complete. The other is in process. Everything is going well so far.

I'm behind on the community database. I now realize that it will be more effective to begin this community outreach after the final website is completed. I have received partner feedback on the process and form but I'm waiting for the web developer to create an automated form before soliciting entries from community partners. This community outreach aspect of the grant will be a few months behind but all of the related expenditures (database and website design) will be completed during this grant cycle.

The primary deliverable, our website and OER (primary video tutorials) are on target. We have already exceeded expected production in this area. We have been working with a temporary website as we create and test tutorials. I've been very please with this aspect of the project.

2. How is spending progressing when compared with the original budget estimates?

I was able to save money over the first term by using unexpected Work Study funds. I found it more challenging than expected to find qualified students the first term, so much of the project work was compressed into the Spring term. I submitted my first expenses over a month ago and no one has been paid yet. I'm not sure if this is the normal turn around or a problem. I'm currently looking into the question on my campus. Most of my expenses will be coming in at the end of the cycle as they are linked to the final website development, which was scheduled for the end of the grant period.

3. Please provide feedback regarding your experience with the project execution. In particular, any issues or roadblocks you've encountered that may have been unexpected.

I had a slow start in the fall due a number of factors:

- I unexpectedly elected to chair a faculty committee in September. This left very little time to devote to the grant early in the fall. In the future I will not propose a grant without a course release.
- I could not find students to hire because students with the necessary skills were already committed for the term. I was only able to find one student to work with over the spring term. It took a full semester to hire most of my tutors. In the future, I will plan a full term for staffing.
- By the spring, I had a wonderful crew but then snow days caused additional delays.
- Assessment is also challenging. I would like to know more about assessment best practices. In the future, I will try to include an assessment consultant in grant budgets.
- I find the paperwork reimbursement process a bit confusing.
- I planned for tutoring drop in hours but few students are utilizing this service. I'm working on outreach and also adding targeted workshops in hopes of bringing in more students before the end of the term. If we continue the project, we will need to improve outreach. I plan to meet with the Writing Center to discuss strategies.
- Because so much of the support is provided through online tutorials, I may need to improve my web analytics and online feedback to get full assessment data.

4. What are your positive observations or pleasant surprises about your team's interaction or project process that might would be helpful to other PI's?

I've been very pleased to see how much my tutors are learning by creating the tutorials. Their collaborations and the atmosphere of the Center is adding to campus community.

I have really enjoyed collaborating with other professors--particularly across the disciplines--on the digital humanities projects.

The engagement of the first year students who participated in our first linked digital project was very rewarding. All seemed very engaged and excited about the digital project and feedback was very positive.

5. Please describe any challenges you've encountered working with your project team that you've found solutions for that might be helpful to other PI's.

I found that we are all so busy it is challenging to find time to meet and coordinate. Faculty time is one of the primary challenges.